

Inside ICE



Dozens of discarded shoes, taken from aliens being held in a drop house in Los Angeles, were found by ICE agents. Smugglers take the shoes to discourage the aliens from trying to escape.

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ICE ARRESTS TWO SMUGGLERS, 146 ALIENS AT L.A. DROP HOUSES

LOS ANGELES, Calif. - Two Guatemalan men are facing federal human smuggling charges following the discovery of two "drop" houses in South Los Angeles May 4 that were being used to hold 146 smuggled migrants from Central and South America.

ICE agents arrived at the scene of the first residence on 80th Street in Los Angeles at around 2 p.m. after receiving a request for assistance from the Los Angeles Police Department. At that location, ICE agents apprehended 60 illegal aliens, including two men suspected of helping orchestrate the smuggling plot. The group of smuggled migrants included 45 Ecuadorians, 10 Salvadorians and three Guatemalans.

Less than five hours later, ICE received a call from the Los Angeles Police Department about a second drop house about 20 blocks from the first location.

When agents arrived at the residence they found 88 smuggled aliens trapped inside the stiflingly hot home. The aliens told agents the smugglers locked them inside and fled after seeing media coverage about the discovery of the first drop house.

Agents say the house was teeming with roaches and rodents and the rooms were littered with dirty clothes, discarded food and human waste. The nationalities of the migrants in the second house were

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ICE FINDS 146 ALIENS IN TWO L.A. DROPHOUSES

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still being determined as Inside ICE went to press, but the majority were believed to be from Central and South America.

"This is another example of the greed and ruthlessness of those involved in the human smuggling trade," said Loraine Brown, ICE Los Angeles Special Agent-in-Charge. "To flee and leave these people essentially imprisoned in this home, it's fortunate authorities arrived when they did."

ICE's initial investigation indicates the two drop houses were likely connected. Agents say the majority of the smuggled migrants reported crossing the border in Arizona and were destined for cities across the United States.

Federal charges are expected to be filed against two Guatemalan nationals taken into custody at the first location. ICE's investigation is continuing and agents hope to identify higher-level operatives in the smuggling scheme.



An ICE Detention and Removal Officer stands watch over a group of illegal aliens found at a drop house in the Los Angeles area.

UNITED KINGDOM EXTRADITES PHILLY DRUG KINGPIN

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. - An accused West Philadelphia marijuana trafficker who fled the United States in 1995 following the murder of his wife and another witness has been extradited from England to the United States to stand trial on federal charges that include continuing criminal enterprise and money laundering, and state charges that include murder.

"The criminal activity of this man and his associates divided this city and caused great long-term harm to its citizens and institutions," said Bill Reid, ICE Philadelphia Special Agent-in-Charge. "ICE remained intent on locating him and we looked forward to the day when he would be held accountable for his actions. Today is that day."

ICE special agents in Philadelphia launched their investigation into Corbin Thomas in November 1993 after receiving information about a suspicious currency transaction involving the exportation of vehicles to Jamaica. After several years of investigation, ICE agents developed information indicating that Thomas presided over a violent drug trafficking and money laundering organization in metropolitan Philadelphia.

In September 1998, ICE special agents executed arrest warrants on 24 individuals associated with this organization. ICE agents arrested Philadelphia police officer Peter Henry --a close friend of Corbin Thomas who laundered money for Thomas through his personal credit union account-- and several other defendants. However, four of the defendants, including Thomas, escaped and became wanted fugitives.

Through cooperation with ICE agents, Jamaican authorities attempted to locate Thomas and another fugitive believed to be residing in Jamaica. Jamaican authorities later learned that Thomas and a co-conspirator had fled to London in the United Kingdom.

As a result of the ICE investigation up to that point, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police Department, were later able to bring murder charges in December 2002 against Thomas for the killing of Hope Thomas, his wife. Hope Thomas was shot to death by a masked man Nov. 15, 1995.

In 2002, ICE agents received information indicating that Thomas and a co-conspirator were hiding at a specific address in London. The ICE Attaché in London passed this information to New Scotland Yard, which arrested Thomas and his accomplice shortly thereafter.

Thomas vigorously contested his extradition. Nevertheless, Thomas was successfully extradited to Philadelphia April 29. Thomas was arraigned in federal court in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania on the fugitive warrant and remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service. If convicted on the federal charges alone, Thomas faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, a 20 year mandatory sentence, and a \$17.75 million fine.

Inside ICE is an e-newsletter produced by the ICE Office of Public Affairs to inform the public about the mission, operations and activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Please send comments and contributions to:

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ICE SHUTS DOWN DRIVER'S LICENSE FRAUD SCAMS

ICE agents arrested 10 state motor vehicle employees in three states during April 20-27 for unrelated schemes to fraudulently issue driver's licenses and identification cards.

ICE agents believe as many as 2,000 illegal aliens either bought or attempted to illegally obtain valid driver's licenses and state identification cards as a result of the fraudulent schemes.

The largest recent case was on April 27 in Miami, Fla., where three Florida Department of Motor Vehicle employees and 49 illegal aliens were arrested in a massive fraud scheme that included the illegal sale of commercial and hazardous materials operator licenses. Those licenses were sold for fees of up to \$3,000.

"This type of criminal activity," said Jesus Torres, ICE Miami Special Agent-in-Charge, "poses a national security and public safety risk to our community. Those who engage in these activities must give an account for their actions."

The enforcement action in Florida follows similar investigations in Michigan and Maryland.

On April 22, ICE agents arrested three Marylanders for a scheme where, in return for the payment of more than \$1,000 per applicant, they provided Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) documents without showing the documentation required under Maryland law. One person arrested was an MVA employee and another was a former MVA employee. MVA Internal Investigations and the United States Attorney's Office assisted ICE with the investigation.

In Dearborn, Mich., on April 20 ICE agents, assisted by U.S. Postal

Inspectors, arrested four individuals and seized more than \$20,000 and a variety of document production equipment as part of an ongoing investigation into the production and trafficking of fraudulent Michigan driver's licenses, U.S. visas, foreign passports and Social Security cards.

That investigation began after U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers seized a number of blank Guinea driver's licenses. An undercover ICE agent, posing as an Iraqi arms dealer with an Afghan passport, made contact with the conspirators.



One of 52 people arrested in Florida is taken away by an ICE agents following a five-month investigation into a scheme which provided illegal aliens with fraudulently obtained state identification cards and driver's licenses.

NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY AGENTS WIN TASK FORCE WORK HONORS

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Twenty-eight ICE agents were among 148 law enforcement officials honored May 4 for their work on 12 separate investigations undertaken as part of the New York/New Jersey Region Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

Of the 12 investigations for which the investigators and prosecutors were recognized, three were ICE-led cases, three were joint cases, and four were led by other agencies with ICE participation. The ICE-led cases include:

Operation Snowstorm exposed a criminal network that used its inside knowledge of the aviation sector to bypass border inspections and airport security measures at John F. Kennedy International Airport. In total, more than 200 kilograms of cocaine and 300 kilograms of marijuana were seized, along with more than \$500,000, five luxury vehicles, and several weapons.

Operation Caribbean Loot tar-

geted the money laundering and narcotics trafficking activities of Jean Eliobert Jasme, resulting in the complete dismantling of Jasme's organization. Jasme was, until his capture, one of the most notorious drug traffickers in the Caribbean. Due to the collaborative efforts of prosecutors and agents from ICE and DEA, Jasme and 11 other targets were successfully prosecuted. Agents recovered more than \$11 million.

Operation Meltdown targeted the money laundering activities of a Colombia-based criminal organization with links to the Cali drug cartel. The investigation found that numerous businesses in New York were laundering narcotics proceeds by accepting narco-dollars in exchange for gold. The gold was then smuggled out of the U.S. and sold in Colombia to gold refiners. Twenty-three people were arrested and more than \$7.5 million in cash, gold and diamonds was seized or forfeited.

ICE ARRESTS 66 ILLEGALS AT FEDERAL WORKSITE

ORLANDO, Fla. — ICE agents arrested 66 illegal aliens working at a federal construction site April 27 after an ICE investigation that began with a lead provided by Congressman John Mica's office.



This aerial view shows the construction site of the new federal courthouse in Orlando where ICE arrested 66 illegal aliens.

The illegal workers were employed by contractors and sub-contractors and were building the future home of the federal court for the Middle District of Florida.

The ICE investigation revealed that the illegal workers utilized fraudulent

Social Security numbers and other counterfeit documents to obtain employment by various sub-contractors working for Hensel Phelps Construction Company.

"Today's arrests are a reflection of the federal government's continued commitment to safeguarding our nation's critical infrastructure, said Raymond M. Connolly, ICE's Acting Special Agent-in-Charge in Tampa. "Thanks to Congressman Mica's information we were able to neutralize a potential vulnerability in our community."

"Our laws must be enforced," said Congressman Mica. "I am pleased that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement agents are appropriately taking action to crack down on the problem of illegal immigration, particularly where important federal projects are under construction."

The illegal aliens arrested at the site are from Mexico, Guatemala and Nicaragua. All are in ICE custody awaiting the outcome of their cases.

The investigation is ongoing. The arrests were made with the assistance of the Orlando Police Department, the U.S. Marshals Service, ICE's Office of Detention and Removal Operations and Federal Protective Service.

In accordance with ICE's homeland security mission, ICE agents prioritize worksite enforcement efforts by focusing on investigations related to critical infrastructure, national security and employers who engage in egregious criminal violations. Unauthorized workers employed in sensitive security sites and critical infrastructure facilities -- such as airports, nuclear power and chemical plants and defense contractors -- are vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists, smugglers, traffickers or other criminals.

An employer who knowingly hires unauthorized workers may be criminally prosecuted or be faced with administrative fines of up to \$11,000 per person. ICE works with employers to educate them about their responsibilities in this area.

ICE DEPORTS RWANDAN IN LANDMARK GENOCIDE CASE

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — A Rwandan man who committed acts of genocide in his home country and subsequently tried to illegally enter the United States was deported April 22 by ICE detention and removal officers.



Enos Iragaba Kagaba

The case marks the first time an individual was found to be inadmissible to the United States for having engaged in genocide.

Enos Iragaba Kagaba, 50, a citizen of Rwanda, was arrested in December 2001 at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. He was initially charged with attempting to enter the United States without valid entry documents, and also with fraud for misrepresenting his identity.

A subsequent in-depth investigation conducted both domestically and abroad by special agents with the former INS uncovered evidence that Kagaba had committed acts of genocide during the 1994 war in Rwanda that killed 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Kagaba requested a hearing before a

federal immigration judge, who ultimately sustained the genocide charge in August 2003, as well as the charge that he did not have valid entry documents. That ruling was appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals, which in September 2004 sustained the lower court's rulings. An appeal by Kagaba to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals was also denied.

"The United States will not be a safe haven for human rights abusers," said Mona M. Ragheb, Chief of ICE's Human Rights Law Division (HRLD). "Those who persecute others have no right to seek protection in the United States."

ICE DEPORTS MAN WHO ABUSED HIS SIX-YEAR-OLD STEPDAUGHTER

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. - A man allowed to come to the United States to marry a U.S. citizen was deported by ICE officers after being convicted of sexually abusing children, including his own 6-year-old stepdaughter.



Peter Dekker

ICE Detention and Removal officers escorted Peter Marius Dekker back to the Netherlands on April 26. Dekker had been legally admitted to the United States in October 1999 on a fiancé visa to marry a U.S. citizen. After the marriage, in April 2000, he was granted status as a conditional permanent resident.

However, Dekker's wife later discovered 60 images of child pornography on the family computer and contacted the Hilltown, Pa., Police Department. The investigation also uncovered photos of a sexual nature containing images of Dekker and his 6-year-old stepdaughter. On November 22, 2004, Dekker was convicted in Bucks County, Pa., on 60 counts of sexual abuse of children. ICE officers took him into custody after he served his sentence and removed him from the United States.

"This man betrayed his wife and his stepdaughter, and he also betrayed the trust of the American people," said Thomas Decker, Field Office Director of ICE's Detention and Removal Operations in Philadelphia. "Anyone granted the privilege of immigration to the United States must respect our laws and our children. Those who do not will be removed."

Dekker's removal from the United States is part of ICE's Operation Predator, a comprehensive initiative designed to protect young people from alien smugglers, human traffickers, child pornographers and other predatory criminals. Since Operation Predator was launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 5,300 individuals.

ICE ARRESTS 18 ILLEGAL ALIENS WORKING ON NAVY CONTRACTS

SAN DIEGO, Calif. - ICE agents arrested 18 aliens April 14 who were working illegally for Naval Coating Incorporated, a San Diego-based company that does maintenance for local ship building businesses, including naval vessels on the U.S. Navy base here.

The workers, most of whom had security badges authorizing them to enter the local Navy base, were identified after agents audited the hiring records of Naval Coating's 167 employees. That audit found that 86 of the employees on the company's payroll were not authorized to work in the United States.

All of the aliens arrested had used counterfeit immigration documents and Social Security cards to gain employment. Two of the men had illegally re-entered the United States after a prior deportation. One of those arrested was a deportable legal resident because he has a criminal conviction for drug smuggling.

The operation is part of Operation Safe Cities, an ongoing ICE worksite enforcement initiative to protect sensitive area businesses from possible security breaches.

ICE ARRESTS THREE IN ARIZONA FOR SMUGGLING COKE IN PICKUP

SELLS, Ariz. - Three local residents are facing federal charges after ICE agents, assisted by the Tohono O'odham tribal police and a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol canine unit, searched a pickup truck in this small southern Arizona community April 27 and recovered one of the largest caches of cocaine ever seized here.



Shown above is some of the 406 lbs. of cocaine found in hidden compartments of a pickup truck in Arizona.

The 1987 Ford pickup truck was parked outside a residence on the community's north side. The Border Patrol canine alerted to two concealed compartments in the sides of the truck's bed. Inside, agents found 406 pounds of cocaine.

The 44-year-old owner of the house, Arthur Pablo, told officers the truck belonged to Francine Joaquin, 34. Agents quickly located Joaquin and Duran Ortiz, 25. Ortiz said Joaquin drove him to the border where the two located the truck. Ortiz said his instructions were to drive the truck to Pablo's house. Ortiz said he and Joaquin were to be paid an unspecified amount by Pablo for delivering the truck, which would then be transported to Tucson on Pablo's flatbed trailer.

Joaquin, Ortiz and Pablo are in federal custody in Tucson and face charges of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. If convicted, the three face a maximum penalty of life in prison.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

RECOGNITION



A young visitor to the ICE display at the National Mall meets the ICE Federal Protective Service K-9 team of Inspector Eric Kradz and his partner, "Barry." ICE joined dozens of federal agencies on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. May 6-7, to participate in Public Service Recognition Week. ICE employees, including officers from ICE's Federal Protective Service and representatives from the Marketing and Outreach Branch of the ICE Office of Public Affairs, staffed a display booth that highlighted ICE's mission and provided information to the public on ICE's structure and operations.